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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 001156

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [NI](#) [UNHRC](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN RESPONSE TO WCAR DEMARCHE (ROUND TWO)

REF: (A) STATE 086714 (B) ABUJA 0967

Classified by CDA Andrews, reason 1.5 (B/D).

1. (SBU) In the absence of the Charge from Abuja, Acting Polcouns delivered the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) demarche on the proposed language on the Middle East for the WCAR Declaration. A/Polcouns spoke with Olusegun Akinsanya, Director of the UN 2nd Unit (which among other matters, handles human rights issues), and, separately, with Christy Mbonu, Minister-Counselor in the UN 2nd Unit, who generally takes the lead on human rights issues. While Mrs. Mbonu was non-committal on the demarche, requesting time to review the talking points and speak with her colleagues, Mr. Akinsanya was both more forthcoming and more sympathetic.

2. (U) Akinsanya broadly agreed on the need to avoid distracting and polarizing issues. "We want to focus on the main themes of the conference," he said. While stressing his own wish to review the "harmonized" language of the draft Declaration (which he believed might have already dispensed with the proposed Middle East language), he said that "extraneous" items should be avoided. "There are more important problems and more fundamental issues to address," he emphasized.

3. (U) Unfortunately from the USG perspective, these "fundamental" discussions, according to Akinsanya, should include reparations and restitution for colonial-era slavery. In this he echoed the sentiments of Mrs. Mbonu in our earlier demarche (REF B).

4. (C) Akinsanya finished by stating he would "study" our talking points, and looked forward to exploring the issues with the USG delegation at the May 21 PrepComm in Geneva. He will not be accompanied by Mrs. Mbonu, probably a plus for us, given her sometimes doctrinaire attitude on human rights issues of concern to NAM and G-77 nations.

5. (C) Comment. While the Nigerians may well support us on the Middle East language issue, when it comes to the question of reparations/restitution for colonial-era slavery, for domestic political reasons as well as notions of solidarity with other African and third world countries, the GON may prove rather intransigent. End comment.
Andrews